

Sacred Spaces and Sensual Selves:

the use of liminal space and sexual symbols in the
creation of erotic identities at contemporary pagan
festivals.

by

Brandon A. Hale

A THESIS

submitted to

The University of Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Social Sciences

2012

Lying awake in my tent I felt annoyed. It had been a very long day, taking interviews, asking questions, participating in rituals, and watching the crowd dance and weave around the central festival fire to the beat of a score of drums. It had been, by any measure, a wonderful first day. I had accomplished all that I had set out to and more. The festival fire I had just come from had been magical; entrancing in its assault on the senses. A myriad of forms, beautiful and bare, colorful and costumed, had danced ecstatically around the fire creating a sensual union of sweat and sand. Glitter sparkling on faces, chests, and backs illuminated by the fire-light came again to my mind as I had first lain down on the comfortable air-mattress in my tent. Then, just as I was starting to slip into unconsciousness, the moaning began, soft at first, but soon escalating in volume. It couldn't have been more than three or four tents away and was starting to sound like what I imagined the wailings of a wild and injured beast might. The sound was joined later by others; further or closer to my tent. The whole wooded valley seemed to become a symphony of sex sounds. Alone in my tent, I found it difficult to find sleep the rest of the night.

The following evening, I again sat outside the festival fire, watching the otherworldly dancers, and taking ethnographic notes in my journal. Considering that I would probably find the same

noisy trouble on this evening as I had the night before I decided that I might encourage the sandman's visit by indulging in a couple of the bottles of mead being sold just steps away from the fire. After my first bottle I was starting to feel the warm sensation spread through my torso and the air around me started to become hazy in such a way that I couldn't completely attribute to the fire's smoke. The drumming and dancing had mesmerized me to a point of trance. Staring at the flames I became aware of a face behind them staring back at me with dark eyes. The eyes and face belonged to a comely girl with long dark hair, black eye-liner, pale skin, a black leather corset and an exotic black lace dress. When she saw that I had met her gaze she smiled invitingly and patted the spot beside her. I made my way around the edge of the circle, outside the twirling of the dancing bodies, and sat beside her. Still smiling from behind her dark eyes, she introduced herself and I reciprocated. Over the course of the following two hours, we indulged in two more bottles of mead, discovered that we shared many spiritual beliefs, had mutual acquaintances in Chicago, and I learned that she was from Rome, Italy. Even through the haze of smoke and alcohol it was also apparent to me that this girl was flirting, unabashedly with me. As the night wore on and we talked and danced together, I lost myself in the visceral experience of the festival. Feeling the hot sand under my bare feet, the waves of

heat radiating from the fire crashing on my face, the touch of the girls fingers upon my chest as our bodies orbited and twirled around the fire, consumed me and the objective observer was, for the time, consumed as well. As people left the circle and the glowing coals faded in the dying fire, a lighter shade of night could be detected on the eastern side of the sky. As we reclined against the stone wall marking the edge of the fire circle I asked her if I would see her again around the fire the following evening. She smiled a crooked, half-smile and said that if she were to go back to her tent then she would most assuredly wake her tent-mate and make her very grumpy. She continued saying "I could just stay in your tent, if that's ok and if you have room for me". I led her back to my tent, opened the front flap and noticed the dark thick tribal art tattooed along the small of her back as she crawled inside. I never noticed the sounds that had so annoyed me the night before, and when we were both finally so exhausted that we could no longer stave off sleep, I slept fine.

The study of "new age" culture has been a growing pedagogical focal point in the United States and Western Europe over the

past two decades¹. In particular, and most relevant to this paper, is the study of the specific sub-set of the new age culture termed Neopaganism². The increase in popularity among the various belief systems categorized under the umbrella of "pagan" has been followed in multiple disciplines throughout both the humanities and social sciences. Many of the works and studies on Neopaganism, while occasionally pointing to the sexual activity within the culture as a form of 'liberation', more often than not, skirt the issues and try to diminish the formative and central role sex and intimacy play within the practices of new age religions, generally, and Neopaganism, specifically. Nowhere is the centrality of sexual expression so showcased within the new age movement as at Pagan festivals³. A thorough reading of relevant literature and the review of my own field observations support this assertion. It is not enough, however, to show that 'sex happens' within the new age religious community and at pagan festivals; the 'why' must be determined. The absence of this 'why' is noted by Kripal (2001), when he states, "scholarly

¹ (Adler 1979), (Berger 1999), (Bonewits 1971), (Garrison 1964), (Greenwood 2000), (Jackson 2005), (Kermani 2009), (Little 1995), (Luhmann 1989), (Madden 2008), (MoonOak 2009), (Orion 1995), (Pike 2001), (Raabe 2009), (Rafferty 2008), and (York 2003) are some examples from the previous three decades.

² The academic term Neopaganism covers a number of belief systems which center are nature-oriented and often involve a belief in magic. In 1991 a survey taken at the Pagan Spirit Gathering festival in Ohio, festival attendees identifies with twenty-two different religious traditions including, but not limited to, Wicca, Witchcraft, Druidism, Shamanism, Paganism, Asatru, Egyptian Mysteries, Mayan, Native American tradition, and Yoruba (Pike 2001). Conservative estimates place the total number of Neopagans to be a few hundred thousand (Orion 1995).

³ Pagan festivals are celebratory events of varying length, held annually across the United States, in which persons of faiths covered under the umbrella term 'neopaganism' come to network, worship, celebrate pagan holidays, and to escape 'mundania'. Pagan festivals are explained more fully later in the paper.

analyses of how and why the two domains of esotericism and eroticism are so intimately interwoven are difficult to find". The present work then, explores the substantive role sexuality and eroticism hold within the neo-pagan and new age cultures in general, and why these facets of the new age culture are most prevalent within the boundaries of pagan festivals, specifically. Initially, I will provide an overview of pagan festivals to familiarize the reader with the topic and give a general knowledge of festival norms. I will then review the relevant current literatures on neopaganism and sexuality. Following the literature review I will relate and discuss my personal observations from fieldwork conducted as a participant-observer at pagan festivals over the past decade⁴. Finally, I will analyze the data collected from both research of relevant literature and my own field experience, using Turner's theories of liminality⁵ and the methods of symbolic contextualization⁶ utilized by Geertz. This analysis then, will show that participants at neopagan festivals use the liminality created by the rituals and ecstatic dance, combined with the deeply sexual symbolisms prevalent

⁴ Pagan Pride Day (Paducah, KY 2002), Moondance (Carellton, GA 2002), Summerstar (Beacon Rock, WA 2002), Company of Stars (Bailey, CO 2002), Wild Magick (Bedford, IN 2003), Elffest (Bedford, IN 2003), Witches Ball (Bedford, IN 2005), Moondance (Carellton, GA 2007), Pagan Pride Day (St. Louis, MO 2007), Babalon Rising (French Lick 2008), Pagan Spirit Gathering (Salem, MO 2009), Elffest (Bedford, IN 2009), Wild Magick (Bedford, IN 2009), Elffest (Bedford, IN 2010), Babalon Rising (French Lick, IN 2010).

⁵ *The Ritual Process* (1974) and *A Forest of Symbols* (1967), Victor Turner.

⁶ *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Clifford Geertz

within the festival space, to explore alternative and hidden sexual identities not available to them outside the festival.

The Festival

Pagan festivals, or Neopagan festivals as they are referred to within academia, first began to occur in their modern day form in the late 1960s across the American landscape. The festivals started to grow rapidly in the 1980s and have continued to grow steadily both in the number of festivals held and geographical locations. Starwood, currently the largest annual festival, was first held in 1980 at Sherman, New York. Today, the Starwood festival is held in Pomeroy, Ohio and regularly attracts over 3000 people from across the United States. Neopagan festivals have increased greatly in number, beginning with only a handful in the early 1980s, to over 60 major festival⁷ events from April to October in 2011 (Jung 2011). When examining Neopagan festivals as a space for the creation of alternative identities and sexualities, it is useful to view the entire festival experience as a form of text, to borrow the metaphor from Geertz (Geertz 1973). It is a text authored by the multitude of individuals attending the festival, teaching the workshops, preparing the feasts, and drumming out the heart-beat

⁷ Information for 2011 was taken from www.witchvox.com, a widely subscribed to Neopagan website which regularly posts major festivals around the United States and Canada.

of the festival around midnight fires⁸. In all of these festival expressions the symbols of change, freedom, and sexuality manifest themselves. The festival experience allows participants to explore themselves in a social setting, by and through means generally unattainable in the world outside the festival's boundaries. Neopagan festivals vary in length with most lasting from one weekend to a full week, and are held in both public and private spaces. Regardless of whether a festival is taking place on State lands, or is held in a privately owned sanctuary, the space is considered closed and sacred for the duration of the festival; opening to closing rituals. Most festivals start by allowing people to come into the dedicated festival space early in the morning of the first scheduled day. This first day is spent setting up camp by a majority of festival attendees. Festival goers try to arrive as early as possible to find and claim the best spots to set up their tents. Some groups send 'scouts' ahead of them to get to the festival grounds and set up multiple tents for attendees who want to create a circle of tents in a specific location or for a specific theme. These groups of attendees who partition themselves into separate groups often call themselves, 'camps'. Some themes are belief oriented, such as the Asatru camp, others

⁸ Festival fires have been understood as the central occurrence, around which the rest of the festival experience revolves. These observations have been witnessed many authors (Berger 1999), (Orion 1995), (Pike 2001).

have themes based on a specific focus of the group involved. Some of these, like the 'Cloven Fruit'⁹ camp, search for areas 'out of the way' due to the sexual nature of the camp's theme. Towards dusk of the first festival night, an opening ritual is usually performed¹⁰. All festival attendees present are expected to participate¹¹ to foster and acknowledge the community (Pike 2001). Opening ritual generally starts with a ritual leader, or leaders, explaining the technicalities of the ritual work, what is expected from the ritual attendants, and then, narrating the reasons behind the ritual, and the festival in general¹². This narration often ties the current festival to those past, thereby, creating a sense of continuity and cohesion among those festival goers present with former wisdom-seekers who tread the same path, coming to previous festivals. After the opening ritual, people retire to their tents or, more often, gather in dance around the festival fire. The festival fire is lit at the apex of Opening Ritual and every effort is made to keep it burning throughout the entire duration of each festival. Tender is fed to the central fire throughout the festival, but at night, it is fed enough to get it very large so as to accommodate the lighting

⁹ The Cloven Fruit camp is one in which I participated. Further description is given in my Observations.

¹⁰ Most all organized festivals which have repeated annually develop opening rituals for each festival. Some newer festivals without history or precedent do not have opening rituals.

¹¹ The communal nature of Opening ritual was also observed by myself in fieldwork conducted for research in support of my Honors undergraduate Thesis, *Fires and Festivals: a Study of Pagan Festivals in Contemporary America* (Hale 2002).

¹² Many festivals have annual themes assigned to them, such as 'Love and Strength' or 'Healing the Children'. Narrative text from the 2002 Summerstar festival opening ritual is included in Appendix A.

needs of those dancing and drumming around the fire. The fire, through the embodied experiences of dancing and drumming, and the intimate processes of erotic contact, becomes the "symbolic center" of the festival participant's experience (Pike 2001). Throughout the remaining days of the festival, before the Closing Ceremony, the festival offers the attendee a vast array of optional pass-times and pleasures. Some of these include making purchases at the various vendors who set up shop, attending one of the many workshops and seminars¹³ on topics such as spirituality, sexuality, erotic massage, divination, drum-making, goddess worship, participating in or observing a scheduled ritual or ceremony, watching a musical performance, or visiting one of the festivals theme-camps to share stories and make new acquaintances. At the ending of the festival, most often at noon, on the last scheduled day, a Closing Ceremony is held, which, like the Opening Ritual, is implicitly considered mandatory by those attendees still present. Closing Ceremony is also similar to the Opening Ritual in that it strives to instill a sense of continuity in its participants. However, rather than attempting to forge a link with the past as does Opening Ritual, its purpose is to recognize the community, currently present, and hold to the promise of future communities to come.

¹³ Festivals regularly hold a multitude of workshops intended to educate the participant in a vast array of topics of Neopagan interest. Starwood festival in 2003 had over 120 classes including, Intuitive Touch, Pagan Faith Healing, Capoeira, GLBT Issues, Bellydance, Sexual Boundaries, Juggling, Survival, Ale Brewing, spirit dolls, barding 101, modern myth and magic, etc.

Review

In May of 1991, Sarah Pike (2001), conducted her first investigation into the world of pagan festivals. In her book *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves*, she relates to the reader her observations and conclusions concerning field work she conducted on Neopagan festivals between the years of 1991 and 1996. Dr. Pike's research suggests that the Neopagan movement, generally, and pagan festivals in particular, are a response and reaction from persons who have somehow become disenchanted with modernity or dissatisfied with mainstream western religions, most commonly fundamentalist Christian faiths and Judaism (Pike 2001). Through their participation in group rituals and by attending festivals, these persons, whom have felt ostracized from the present contemporary American religious landscape, have found a community of like-minded people within which they can network. For many, this network is a central part of their social support system. Pike reveals and discusses the commonality of experience among festival goers. For example, many festival attendees have had experiences with un-accepting family members or friends in the past, and find that those people they meet at the festivals to feel more truly like their family (Pike 2001). She states that, "Neopagans tell stories of past lives and childhood

experiences that suggest that the self has many layers, and their festival rituals encourage journeys inward to seek divinity" (Pike 2001). Many of these rituals held at Neopagan festivals involve the participants relating to the others present, stories of their past experiences. Each individual, through the *liminal*¹⁴ space created by both the rituals and the ecstatic environment of the festival fire, creates for him or herself an alternate identity with which to speak truth about themselves to themselves, thereby adding their voice to the story and scribing their own lines into the fairytale texts that are Neopagan festivals. Concerning the festival experience as an embodied and erotic experience, Pike notes that "as they walk differently and dance differently, festival goers claim that the body is transformed, and so they also say, is the self. As one ..festival goer puts it, the fire "is a special place, a place to do special things," and these things are "things" related to the body. Costumed, tattooed, jewel covered, and glistening nude dancers, chanting, drummers and other musicians, smoke, and flame, make festival fires a feast for the senses" (Pike 2001). So, as can be seen, Pike's work shows that while Pagan festivals are concerned with self-awareness, self-expression and boundary exploration, those are experienced within the confines of a sexually charged space where one is

¹⁴ *The Ritual Process*, Victor Turner (1969).

exposed to and surrounded by erotic imagery. This is further evident in the following passage, "...the goal is to strive for a playfulness and joy in self-expression, but in a very adult fashion - erotic dancing for example. Nudity may evoke the simplicity and innocence of childhood, but within a sexually charged setting" (Pike 2001). Within these Neopagan communities persons find greater freedom of expression, and a more diverse palate of colors from which to use in the painting of their own identities. For many festival goers that fresh identity is an alternative one, which most feel would be unacceptable by the world outside the festival. Hyper-sexual, homosexual and transgendered personas are all examples of such identities, often viewed negatively by an attendee's 'reality' outside the festival experience¹⁵. This 'real' world of modernity is collectively referred to as 'Mundainia' by the Pagan community. The new identities forged at the festival fires are often of a more sexually liberated nature than their mundane identities worn in "Mundainia". Pike shows how the Neopagan movement, while drawing from many sources which date back centuries, is in fact a rather recent phenomenon which began to emerge on the American social geography in the late 1960s (Pike 2001).

¹⁵ One such new identity I had the pleasure of interviewing at Summerstar, a festival held annually at Beacon Rock State park in Washington. His chosen festival name was Puck, and he explained that he had recently discovered paganism and felt a connection to its teachings but was extremely fearful of his grandmother. He went on to explain that she was very conservatively Christian, and that she had abused him when she felt he had done things in the past that were 'against God'.

Many of the Neopagans that attend the festivals are often "evolved hippies" of the 1960s. Many of the people that attend pagan festival regularly are in their 50s and 60s, and were active participants of the 1960s counter-culture, pushing forward the decade's sexual revolution. These associations between the counter-culture of the 1960s and Neo-pagans of today were observed by Berger (1999). Berger explains to her reader that "as heirs to the counter-culture, the Neo-Pagan community is on the whole sexually permissive - accepting open sexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and nontraditional family forms, such as group marriages and open marriages. Witches exalt both homosexuality and heterosexuality as magical acts" (Berger 1999). Neo-pagans, like the participants of the 60s and 70s counterculture, are generally more sexually liberated and accepting of others choice of partner or partners. This acceptance is easily observed at Neo-pagan festivals where workshops on human sexuality, are commonplace. Issues of homosexuality, polyamory, sacred sexuality, and tantric yoga are discussed openly, as are the problems that arise in the outside world when a person makes the life choice to embrace an alternative life-style. These erotic themes are particularly present during many Pagan Rites of Spring. Many festivals across the country are held on these especially sacred days on the Pagan calendar. Berger writes that, "Rituals, particularly those

that occur in the spring at either the equinox or Beltane, have sexual flavor, because fertility is being celebrated... the rituals focus on fertility in nature and among people. The symbolic expression of sexuality can be quite explicit" (Berger 1999). When describing the rituals and celebrations of Beltane she states further that, "this is the time of the renewal of the earth and the growing strength of the sun. Sexuality - heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual - is openly celebrated at Neo-Pagan rituals. Sex is seen as a magically powerful act" (Berger 1999).

The observation of a connection between the 1960s and 1970s counter culture and Neo-pagans of today is also collaborated by Turner's work *The Ritual Process* (1969). In this work he points out that the "values of *communitas* are strikingly present in the . . . behavior of what came to be known as the 'beat generation', who were succeeded by 'hippies'" (Turner 1969). Hippies and their successors the "teeny-boppers" were considered "cool" members of society and were primarily composed of persons in the adolescent and young-adult age groups (Turner 1996). The upkeep of the values of *communitas*¹⁶ is still alive in America and has found its host in Neopagan culture. Neopagans, descendants of the hippies and teeny-boppers before them,

¹⁶ Turner says of *Communitas* that it is a concept hard to define. It is elusive and hard to pin down. It emerges where social structure is not. It is in fact the antithesis of structure. It is "a moment in and out of time" (Turner 1969). Its attributes include transition, homogeneity, equality, the sacred, anonymity and simplicity (Morris 1987).

exemplify the nature of Turner's ideas of *communitas*. Turner describes hippies as those "who 'opt out' of the status-bound social order and acquire the stigmata of the lowly", that they "stress personal relationships rather than social obligations" (Turner 1969). This ideal is born out in the way festival attendees, Neo-pagans, use the liminal environment created at festival and around the festival fire to break down existing social constraints and replace them with ephemeral, liberal relations with fellow festival goers. Even the costuming employed by many of the festival's participants and dancers around the fire, a majority of which accentuates the erotic nature of the human form, both male and female, can be seen as imparting a hyper-sexual power to the transformed identity. Victor Turner describes liminality in his work, *The Ritual Process* (1969), as a state of being "necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons (in a liminal state or environment) elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned by law, custom, convention" Turner describes liminality and liminal *personae* as being on the threshold, as having "no status, property, insignia,... position in a kinship system- in short, nothing that may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or

initiands". Neopagan festival participants are just that. In creating new identities they are "new" people... neophytes and initiands. Turner goes on to explain that "liminal entities . . . may be disguised as monsters, wear only a strip of clothing, or even go naked..." This again, accurately describes Neopagan festivals in their tendency to wear unusual costume and in many cases perform ritual "sky clad" otherwise known as nude (Luhrmann 1989). Turner, in his discussion of persons experiencing the liminal, states that "It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life" (Turner 1969).

Luhrmann (1989) takes an alternative position concerning the aims behind the creation of liminal space at pagan festivals and by pagans in general¹⁷. Luhrmann concentrates her perspective more on the issues surrounding the practice of magic within the pagan group. She states that it is her belief that the liminal space is created to 'suspend one's disbelief' so to speak. She states that the reason for "the creation of a difference, something outside the bounds of normal society, is to make the

¹⁷ I disagree with this conclusion. While liminality does have the effect of causing those within to suspend disbelief, indeed this is one of liminality's purposes, it seems to me as if this use of the space is, at best, secondary to the purpose of identity creation and sexual liberation.

participants feel as if they are of another, different, sacred world" (Luhrmann 1989). She argues that Neopagans use the liminality at rituals and festivals to "make the that-which-is-not seem persuasively more real" (Luhrmann 1989). Luhrmann asserts that today's 'witches' work in the nude to show forth a symbol of freedom, and also possibly to attract new members through salacious advertisement. She states, "another symbol of the secrecy and violation of convention, most covens work in the nude. This is ostensibly a sign of freedom, but probably stems from the evocative association of witchcraft and sexuality, and a utopian vision of a paradisial past" (Luhrmann 1989). She insists that "There are no orgies, little eroticism, and in fact little behaviour that would be different if clothes were being worn" (Luhrmann 1989).

Greenwood (2000) differs from Luhrmann in her assessment of the role of sexuality within the new age community. In contrast to Luhrmann (1989) who proclaims that the wiccan covens and magical societies are concerned mainly with deceiving themselves into a feeling of self-created, psychologically induced, spiritual epiphany, Greenwood sees the importance of sexuality to the practice of esoteric new-age religions. In her book, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, sexuality is mentioned 204 times in a 240 page work. Greenwood, while touching upon many various

esoteric spiritual movements, focuses mainly on witchcraft, specifically feminist witchcraft. Referring to Susan Palmer's three gender/sexuality typologies¹⁸ (Palmer 1994), she identifies Wicca as falling into the 'sex polarity' type and states that "in feminist witchcraft the emphasis has changed from a focus on feminine and masculine polarity to honouring a 'flexible sexuality' - an ecstatic exploration of other ways of using sexual energy" (Greenwood 2000). In Greenwood's view new age religions, especially Wicca and its branches, are predominately concerned with the interplay of sexual energies and arch-types, sexual exploration and relationships, both with others and the self. Eroticism is at the heart of modern day paganism, and sexual liberation is at all depths of the new age current. For today's practitioner of the occult, sexual energies underlie the entire experience of life and the world. Greenwood's research supports this assertion by her statement that "in wicca, sex is seen to be a manifestation of the essential polarity that pervades and activates the whole universe" (Greenwood 2000). These ideologies manifest themselves in the practice of new age religions and find most fertile ground in the liminality afforded at pagan festivals.

¹⁸ Susan Palmer has identified three major gender/sexuality typologies in her study of women's roles in new religions, and these are useful in understanding attitudes to gender and sexuality in high magic, wicca and feminist witchcraft:

Sex Polarity – where women and men are seen to be unequal and different.

Sex Complementarity: – women and men seen as different but equal.

Sex Unity: – tolerance of sexual ambiguity (Palmer 1994) (Greenwood 2000).

Another scholar to examine the ties between the esoteric and erotic is Jeffrey Kripal. He notes, that as academics "...our collective eye-opening to both sexuality and religion as fundamentally related fields of discourse amenable to rational analysis and hermeneutical insight is part of the same broad Enlightenment that sets Western critical understandings of religion and sexuality apart from (and often in serious and irresolvable conflict with) all previous Western and virtually all historical and contemporary non-Western understandings of the same". (Kripal, *The Serpent's Gift* 2007). In considering the strong vein of the sexual and erotic within new-age mystical communities, and the increased instance of 'non-traditional' sexual lifestyles within the same, Kripal also suggests that sexual suffering may act as a trigger for one's study of and attraction to the mystical (Kripal, *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom* 2001). Many homosexual neo-pagans express that they remember a feeling of oppression and resentment in the world outside of paganism, and felt safer and more accepted at pagan festivals (Pike 2001). The creation of a 'sacred space' at Neopagan festivals for the performance of alternative sexual identities due to adversity and ridicule in one's social reality is spoken to in Serena Nanda's work, *Gender Diversity*, in which she states that, "hostile social attitudes toward gender diversity, specialized occupations associated with gender

variants, and other factors may lead to the spatial segregation of gender variants and/or the development of subcultures and social communities" (Nanda 2002).

Observations

In my participation and study of Neopagan festivals I have been exposed to many expressions of sexuality, both through organized rituals and spontaneously through individual participants. While the festival experience is not entirely about the erotic and sexual, it is present throughout. My first exploration in the field of the festival was during the Moondance neo-pagan celebration near Atlanta, Georgia. I was lucky enough to enter the field with an informant in tow. She had gone to Moondance the two years previous and had offered to introduce me to some regular attendees she knew. My first studies of Neo-pagan culture centered on the creation of alternative identities, so at this first festival I focused on those things that pertained to that topic, or more correctly what I believed at the that time constituted the creation of alternative identity. However, in retrospect, and to an extent even then, I couldn't help but note that there was a high level of sexuality and eroticism throughout the festival. Being held in Georgia during the late summer months, the temperatures soared on some days. I noted that when the air was too hot for

people to participate in the workshops offered, they spent much time in their tents, oftentimes with another. Walking the path between the tents I could hear the couplings of persons within. They made no attempt at subtlety, and I in fact, after the first day, succumbed to custom and found myself spending most of the hotter part of the day in the tent with my friend and informant. Since that first experience in the field, I have been to multiple Neo-pagan festivals across the United States. At each of those times in the field the role of sexual exploration and celebration was everywhere apparent. Once while at the Moondance festival I was fortunate enough to observe and participate in a game called The Cloven Fruit. I came across a group of colorful tents which had formed themselves into a camp, a little set aside from the rest of the camp. The group had been coming to Moondance annually for the last six years, and had come to be known as the "Cloven Fruit" camp. This name came from the game they played each night after dancing around the festival fire. The game had gained the attention of other festival goers over the previous years. The game, called Cloven Fruit, involved a large apple, which had been studded by dozens of whole cloves, hence 'cloven fruit'. The game started with all attending gathering in a large circle, usually 20 to 30 people. Almost all present were inebriated by the consumption of varied alcoholic beverages and the imbibing of other substances. One person

(female), with the fruit, would start the game by passing it to a person of their choice around the circle. That person then had the option of either pulling off a clove with their fingers or pulling one off with their teeth. If the recipient removed a clove by hand, the response is platonic and the receiver of the fruit was required to give the giver a hug. If, however, the clove is removed with the teeth, the response is sexual and the one who initiated the exchange is required to kiss the recipient of the fruit. After the exchange it is the recipient's turn to give the fruit to another person seated around the fire, and await their response. These are the only rules to the game, and it goes on until the last clove is pulled. This game is started late and no one is allowed to watch without participation.

Therefore I became a participant observer during this part of the festival. Through four nights participation in the game I came to understand certain things about the game. The game accomplishes two things for participants. The first is a pushing on social and sexual boundaries which is an ever-present goal of the festival. This boundary testing is accomplished in the following way. The game starts late and usually last until an hour or two before dawn. It starts out mostly platonic with a few smooches here and there. But, as people drink more alcohol and their inhibitions are lessened, the game takes on a more serious and sexual tone. Within three hours of starting the game

it is not unusual to see a man hand the fruit to another man, or a woman to woman. The first of such incidents usually elicited much laughter, but was a definite turning point for the game. Afterward the instances of homosexuality were more frequent and sexual contact was the norm. The second goal accomplished by the cloven fruit game is that of testing the waters so to speak. By handing the cloven fruit to another person, while still within the context of a game, a person is able to discern their recipient's reaction to their advances. Through this game, and in this way, many temporary couples are paired off. I witnessed over a dozen such examples of this while I was present at the game (Hale 2002).

At Company of Stars, a Neo-pagan festival held near Denver, Colorado, I was fortunate enough to be present for one of the nightly performances of the Gnostic Mass¹⁹. The Gnostic Mass is a ritual written by the late Aleister Crowley, a man whose writings have greatly shaped modern occultism. The Gnostic mass is a ceremony whose shape is borrowed from the Russian Orthodox Mass. It is stated that Crowley was moved by the beauty of the Russian Orthodox Mass after having witnessed it, and borrowed heavily from it in his creation of the Gnostic Mass. I observed

¹⁹ Duquette, an acknowledged expert on Thelema, in his book, *The Magick of Thelema*, states that, "While the (O.T.O.) is a magical and fraternal organization, within the Order's matrix can be found a jewel which offers all aspirants a unique and beautiful medium for Thelemic religious expression. It is the central ritual of the O.T.O., public and private- The Mass of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (Duquette 1993). A full transcript of this ritual is included as Appendix B.

the ritual to have five participants; the priest, the priestess, the deacon, and two children. The furnishings used in the ceremony are a large multi-tiered altar at one end referred to as a super-altar, a veiled upright tomb at the opposite end, and two altars between them, one with a circular top, the other square. The mass began with the Deacon approaching the central altar and proclaiming the ritual open and stating "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", This statement is one of the tenants of the religion/philosophy of Thelema²⁰. The Deacon then delivered the Gnostic Creed. After this the Priestess entered, both children walking behind her. She gave a greeting "from Earth and Heaven", then made her way to the veiled tomb. There she took a sword and drew back the veil revealing the Priest who was within holding a spear or lance. She consecrated him with earth, air, water and fire before placing a scarlet cloak around his shoulders. The Deacon then brought a crown to the Priestess who placed it on the Priest's head proclaiming, "Be the Serpent thy crown, O thou Priest of the Lord". The Priest then placed the butt of the lance to the ground between his legs and leaned it out and away from his body at a 45 degree angle. The priestess then fell to her knees and put both hands

²⁰ Thelema is the English transliteration of the Greek word *θέλημα*, which is defined as 'will'. The main tenant of Thelema, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" is given in a text entitled *The Book of the Law*. This is not, adherents say, a license to anarchy, but rather a mandate to discover ones true will, and to do it, The most public group who adheres to this philosophy is the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, a masonic style order whose central secrets and initiations involve the communication of what they claim are sexual magick secrets (Duquette 1993).

around the spear and moved them up and down while kissing the shaft of the spear. She moved her hands up and down eleven times before throwing her arms to the side and exclaiming "Be the Lord present among us!" The ceremony continued with the Priest raising the lance above his head and proclaiming "Thee therefore whom we adore we also invoke; by the power of the lifted Lance!" Taking the Priestess by the hand and lifting her, he then took her to the large multi-tiered alter saying "I, Priest and King, take thee, Virgin pure without spot. I upraise thee. I lead thee to the East. I set thee upon the summit of the Earth". Afterward the Priest made circumambulations around the two altars in the center of the space and came to stand in front of the super-altar. Mounting each step (three in total), pausing at each one to recite verse, he finally knelt before the Priestess and extended his hands and arms along her thighs while kissing her knees and inner-thighs. While this was done the Deacon led the congregation in collects. The ceremony was concluded after various choruses were sung by the Priest and answered in song by the congregation (the men and women answering alternatively, by the Priest and Priestess consecrating the sacred host by placing it in the cup and placing the tip of the lance into the cup. Each participant then at the conclusion of the ritual took communion by approaching the super-altar where the Priestess is sitting, taking the wine and bread (cake of light), turning to

the congregation and proclaiming "There is no part of me that is not of the Gods!"

At the Wild Magic festival, held annually at the Lothlorien sanctuary located south of Bloomington, Indiana, while at the nightly festival fire I observed many instances of eroticism and celebrated sexuality. One such instance which was exceptionally note-worthy occurred on the festival's third evening. I was sitting on the edge of one of the tiered walls surrounding the main fire, listening to the pulse of the drums and watching the twirling forms of the dancers spin in their orbits around the blaze, when I perceived a change in the rhythmical movements. The dancing slowed; half of the persons dancing had left the space directly around the fire and were directing those left to step to the outer circle as well. I saw that two dancers, a man and woman were left having approached the fire from opposite sides, East and West. They both appeared to be in their 50s and were dressed only in cloaks thrown across their shoulders. The man's cloak looked to be constructed of black gossamer and seemed to be wired through with piping to emulate the structure of a bats wing. The ends of the cloak were attached his thumb and wrist through loops so that when he raised and lowered his arms one was given the impression of a bat in flight. Besides the cloak he wore only a silver headband with two small antlers

attached. He was thin, slightly built, and had a hair covered torso and unkempt beard, all shot through with gray and silver. He stopped at the western side of the festival fire and stared across the flames to the woman opposite him. She stood, likewise unclothed except for what I had first thought was a cloak, but realized was a series of boas, made not of the normal short feathers, but long dark feathers, like those from a vulture. They streamed down from the length of her arms so that when she threw up her arms it was all blackness and feathers. She was thin as well and had the tattoo of a serpent winding from her ankle up her leg, it's head coming to rest on her inner thigh. They stood, staring at each other for a moment across the circle and through the fire. The drumming had died away and the scene commanded attention. I watched raptly as I could sense that something was happening here, something not scheduled on the Wild Magic program. The two dancers stood still, both of them with their arms outstretched, and then they smiled at one another and immediately began to dance clock-wise, or deosil as it is referred to in pagan terms, around the fire. As they circled the fire and each other, the drums starting to pick back up keeping up with their movements, I perceived that it was more than a dance, it was a courtship ritual. As their bodies, covered in sweat, moved, their arms jerked throwing their wings in varied shapes and patterns, and their bare feet kicked and

shuffled through the hot sand, they kept eyes on each other. As they continued to circle the fire again and again I saw that they were continuously closing the distance between themselves. All other festival-goers present were silent and watched the spectacle unfold before them with what seemed like respect and awe. As they couple eased ever closer to each other the tension of the dance increased. After several minutes the pair united at the eastern side of the fire, rushing violently at each other to close the last bit of distance, and embracing with a kiss and explosion of sexual energy build up throughout the erotic ritual-dance. Their arms lifted together, shielding their faces from the crowd with feathers and cloth, they then ran off into the dark forest hand in hand. Immediately the crowd of dancers rushed back into the sand around the fire and began to dance again in earnest. It was apparent that after the event just witnessed the dancers were more sexually charged; clothing was removed and less individual and more couples commanded the scene. I spoke to persons around the fire later that evening and found that the two dancers were 'elders' of Lothlorien and had been coming to the festivals held here since the Lothlorien sanctuary began. This dance they performed usually, but not always, during the two major festival events on the Lothlorien calendar, Wild Magic and Elffest. It was explained to me that the two of them

always seemed to know, "when the festival needed them" and "when they needed the festival" (Nethim 2004).

Analysis

In reviewing my observations in the field, and through a reading of pertinent literature, it becomes readily apparent that the entire nature of Pagan festivals lends itself to the creation of liminal space and personae as put forth in the theories of Victor Turner. A liminal or threshold experience can be arrived at in various ways; through separation, the dissolving of societal markers of rank, and/or the shedding of society's sexual distinctions among others. For Turner, in his study of the Ndembu, the initiate must be pushed through to a state of liminality. They are broken down to '*tabula rasa*', blank slates, through ordeals and humiliations (Turner 1969). This sort of initiation rite can be seen in the western world inside the military, where in the process of boot-camp, new recruits are stripped of their status as citizens, and reshaped into government soldiers. With the festival attendee, the transition to liminality is willing, not forced. Participant's willingly break from their normal world and readily cast off their old personalities. Festivals are places set apart, often in deep forests, far away from the world of modernity. The spaces of 'Mundania' and 'Festival' are clearly delineated in the minds of

festival goers (Pike 2001). When traveling to the festival, the attendees are willfully separating themselves from their everyday lives. Once within the boundaries of the festival space they remove the clothing of their previous lives and don robes, costumes, masks, or not uncommonly wear nothing but paint and their own skin. The participants cast off their given names and take on new, more ambiguous monikers such as Peh, Tripsy, Kyra, Cygnus, and Treesong (Pike 2001) (Hale 2002). An opening ceremony is held on the first day of the festival, using ritual to further cement the shift from the mundane world to a liminal landscape. The entire journey to the festival then, is both a physical and psychological journey towards a willing transformation of the self into a 'liminal personae'. Opening Ritual finalizes this change for all present allowing the festival to assume the qualities of *communitas* (Turner 1969). Neopagan festivals draw to themselves a wide array of persons from varying social standings. I have encountered professors and drop-outs, ministers and monks, police officers and parolees, all within the boundaries of pagan festivals. However, once the festival takes its first breath with the lighting of the ceremonial opening fire, social division from outside is abolished and all are equal as they dance around the fires exploring themselves and others. This equality and ambiguity is the very definition of *communitas* and is facilitated at Pagan

festivals through the state of liminality brought about through initial use of ritual, and self-imposed difference, at the outset of each pagan festival. This liminal and communal nature is kept present throughout the festival by intermittent ritual performances throughout each day, and moreover by the main festival fires each night. The festival fire is a sacred space within a sacred space. It is the heart of the festival and central in the memories of many festival attendees (Pike 2001). At Lothlorien Nature Sanctuary the central fire space has been surrounded and covered by a structure they call *Thunderdome*²¹. It is a large geodesic dome comprised of metal pipes welded and fit together. The base of the dome is approximately eighty feet in diameter and encompasses the fire pit in the middle, a ring of sand surrounding the fire pit about fifteen feet wide, and then a two tiered platform, much like an amphitheater, rings the entire outer circumference. Drummers sit on the tiers at the outside edge, while dancers fill in the sanded area around the fire. This structure serves to delineate the area or space of the sacred, even in the physical world. The metal pipes reinforcing the imagined boundaries already present in each participants mind as they search out erotic dances and beats within the liminal space created in the time between dusk and

²¹ Thunderdome was a project started in 1997 in response to friction between the noise of the drumming at the sanctuary and the local residents two and three miles away. It was assumed that the structure would buffer the percussion and reverberate it within the dome, hence the name Thunderdome.

dawn. Festival fires, as stated previously, are built up in the late evening and are stoked and given extra fuel around ten each evening. The dancers start to dance, the drummers to drum, and soon the participants are swept up in the fires heat, and the rhythmic beat. The dancers are costumed or sky-clad and these elements are all the kindling of the liminal process. Drumming and music has oft been used in ritual to lift the consciousness of participants from their normal state to one higher (Adler 1979) (Greenwood 2000) (Pike 2001).

Within the context of the Pagan festival, once an identity has been transformed into a liminal persona a new alternate identity is created. The type and nature of this new identity is of interest. An analysis of the rituals performed at festivals, and the sexual symbolism present throughout, point to pagan festivals as primarily a space for sexual exploration and experimentation. Geertz viewed religion as a system of symbols which instill powerful, pervasive and enduring moods in persons by putting forth conceptions of the general order of existence (Geertz 1973). Viewed symbolically the Cloven Fruit game in which I was a participant-observer becomes more than a simple match-making ritual. We have, as part of the game, significant symbolic objects and movements. First there is the object of focus, an apple studded with cloves. The ritual-game is started with the passing of the apple from a female participant to

another participant of either sex²². The symbolism of Eve and the apple in western society is so pervasive as to need almost no explanation. So here we have a magical and pagan performance of the Biblical story of the fall, appropriating symbolism from a culture viewed as hostile and unaccepting to a majority of participants and re-vocalizing the myth to speak neopagan values. Instead of shame at the eating of the fruit, the knowledge is celebrated with a kiss. Scholarly literature on the story of the fall places it as highly erotic in symbolism, and the knowledge imparted by the fruit of the tree is widely read as knowledge of a sexual nature (Kripal, *The Serpent's Gift* 2007). Where is the serpent in this pagan appropriation of Eve's transgression? The serpent is represented symbolically by the sexual urge. In pagan culture, Kundalini²³, or sexual, energy is known by its symbolic representation of a coiled serpent (Kripal, *Esalen* 2007) (Spiegelberg 1962). When considering the physical implement of the game, cloves, within the literatures and teachings of paganism, are considered masculine, to be of the element of fire, possess among their qualities the power of love, and were carried or worn to attract the opposite sex (Cunningham 1991). The apple, outside the biblical reference, is considered

²² As noted previously this first receiver was always male in my observation of the game. I was unable to discern if this was an implicit rule of the game or, as I related previously, the game became more homoerotic as participants became more inebriated and inhibitions faded.

²³ Kundalini is an eastern term, originating in the tantric practices of India, the would best translate to 'active sexual energy' said to be raised from the level of the groin up along the spine through a series of energy sites referred to as chakras.

feminine, of the element of water, and is used in many magical rites as a vessel of love (Cunningham 1991). Looking at the symbolism of the object itself, we see that the apple (feminine) has its skin studded (penetrated) with cloves (masculine). The game of the Cloven Fruit then, both symbolically represents the act of sex through both pagan symbolism and the symbolism of Christian/Gnostic myth of the fall, while simultaneously functioning as arena within the festival in which to physically explore a participants sexual boundaries and desires.

Literature on the Gnostic Mass states that concealed within it is symbolism of the most profound and powerful sexual magic secrets (DuQuette 1991) (Frost 1989). Watching it at the Company of Stars festival, it was obvious that the ceremony was rife with sexual symbolism in both verse and semantics. As Hugh Urban explains, "the Gnostic Mass is a creative re-imagining of the secret rites alleged to have been practiced by the early Gnostics and later corrupted by the Catholic Church. Although there is no physical intercourse involved in the Mass, its symbolism is highly sexual" (Urban 2008). Before the ritual one of the officers, usually the priest, addresses the congregation gathered and explains some of the technical aspects of the ceremony and stresses that the space is being made sacred for the duration of the ritual. As the festival starts music is

played and all participants are led in a ritualistic dialogue with the Deacon. These ritualized dialogues and stress on sacred space fosters the creation of the liminality, allowing for the new symbols communicated by the ceremony to find purchase on a 'blank slate'. The entire opening is blatantly sexual in nature, tying in symbolism from Egyptian myth in the form of Osiris's tomb. Osiris (the Priest) and his spear (phallus) being the objects of veneration and worship. The priestess awakens the Priest from his tomb. This is symbolic of the arousal of the flaccid, or dead, penis. The sexual magic alluded to in the Gnostic Mass is akin to a technique known in magical circles as 'god eating' (Kraig, Modern Sex Magick 2005) (Kraig, Modern Magick 1988). This ritual technique entails the consumption of the combined sexual fluids of a male and female participant, after prolonged sexual arousal, and an exercise of the magical will and visualization at the moment of ejaculation (Crowley, De Arte Magica 1974) (Kraig, Modern Sex Magick 2005) (Schreck 2002). This type of sexual magic is used to create powerful magical forces of will, directed towards a stated goal (Kowalchuk 1994) (Craddock 2010). Hakl (2008) writes on the topic stating that another application of this type of sex magic "is the creation of astral beings. To achieve this goal, the magus' sperm must be combined with the female bodily fluids during sexual intercourse and collected from the vagina afterwards. Only such a spiritual

combination of solar and lunar fluidic forces has the power to create astral beings" (Hakl 2008). Speaking to festival participants I was able to discern that this line of thinking was also present in the context of the Pagan Festival in general. Sexual energies through erotic dance and play, or through actual sexual contact, were sometimes harnessed by festival attendees and used to attract or create "god forms"²⁴ with which person "clothed themselves" (Treesong 2003). Examples of this type of identity creation can be seen clearly in the Gnostic Mass ritual and at the Feast of the Beast²⁵ ritual where the participants are encouraged to "dress in costume, either as god-forms or as their higher selves/true selves" (Babalon Rising 2012).

In these examples, and in a majority of other workshops, ceremonies and general happenings at neopagan festivals, sexual symbols are pervasive. While it cannot be known if every participant in the Cloven Fruit game, observer of a Gnostic Mass, or any other such rituals, will identify and understand all of the sexual symbolism involved, the world of the Pagan festival is comprised of its own system of symbols; and those symbols are decidedly sexual. Geertz (1973) states that "religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life

²⁴ God Forms are aspects of divine called down or invoked, through structured ritual or ritualized dance, into or over a persons normal consciousness or identity (Kraig, Modern Magick 1988). This practice is similar to the descending of the Holy Ghost in some Protestant denominations of Christianity or the Orihsa are called by the babalawo (Ifa Priest) in the Yoruba cultures of Southwest Nigeria, or the Candomble of Brazil (Bastide 1978) (Bascom 1969).

²⁵ Babalon Rising holds an annual festival in which the Feast of the Beast ritual hold a central role (Babalon Rising 2012).

and a specific metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other". This assertion is significant to this research when viewing the festival as a liminal space created specifically for the creation of alternative identities. It has been shown that the festival lends itself to the creation of liminal space, so much so that even the journey to the festival begins the processes by which liminality is accomplished. However, what is significant is that after opening ceremony, the liminal environment being achieved, participants are let loose into the festival grounds, and as the new identities are being created, they are given specific symbols with which to create their new identities and world. The individual person is wiped clean through the liminal process, but the world of the festival into which these neophytes are born is not neutral. The festival is populated by its particular system of symbols; symbols which are a part of the festival space and are 'built-in'. This fact is supported by an examination of scholarly accounts of the festival space. Pike (2001) notes that the liminal personae created through the experience of entrance into a festival are "continually exposed to and surrounded by erotic imagery", and Greenwood stresses that Pagans, specifically Wiccans, believe that eroticism and sexual energies are expressions of the "essential polarity that pervades and activates the whole universe" (Greenwood 2000). The

workshops and rituals scheduled for festivals are decided prior to the production of liminal space, and much of it is of decidedly sexual subject matters²⁶. The system of the pagan festival then contains, as an identifying marker, sexual symbols which are "extrinsic sources of information" (Geertz 1973). These symbols form the available ingredients from which one can choose in the re-creation of the self. Therefore Pagan festivals are not only spaces wherein persons disenchanted with modernity, or searching for like-minds with which to network, come to cast off the weight of reality and play at being elves and nymphs for a weekend. They are primarily, and by design, spaces for the deconstruction of former selves, and arenas for the creation of decided sexual personas. Turner (1969) shows us that in ritual persons are stripped of their identity during the liminal state in order to give a fresh starting point on which to build anew. When creating identity, we do so through application and appropriation of the symbol system in which we find ourselves (Geertz 1973). Scheduled rituals and workshops present at pagan festivals, such as the Cloven Fruit, Gnostic Mass, Feast of the Beast, and Tantric Yoga workshops all envelope festival-goers with hyper-sexual themes and symbols, both implicit and explicit. The newly formed identity, having assimilating these symbols, plunging in and out of the liminal state through ritual and

²⁶ A list of some classes being offered at the 2012 Babalon Rising festival is included as Appendix C.

dance while continuously feeding on the symbolically erotic imagery, is forged as a sexual entity. As such the identities created, and lived through, at pagan festivals reflect this in various ways. Many wear sexually accentuating outfits, or leave clothes behind completely. Many attach themselves intimately to a person or persons, regardless of their attachment status in the world away from the festival. For some, the erotic energy sometimes spontaneously manifests and expresses itself through ceremonies like the erotic dance of the couple I described witnessing at Wild Magick Festival.

Conclusions

Pagan festivals, contrary to contemporary views, are used by their many participants primarily to create new and alternative sexual identities within the safety of a space removed from their normal day-to-day lives. Pagan festivals have been, and continue to be, a safe space for persons of alternative sexuality to express themselves without fear of judgment or reprisal. Pagan festivals have traditionally attracted those whom have felt that their sexual beliefs are not acceptable by family, friends or community. This purposing of pagan festivals has been shown to be quite pronounced with each successive year. This is clearly seen in many recently started

annual pagan festivals across the United States. Babalon Rising and Summerstar are two such festivals which explicitly advertise themselves as 'sexually themed' festival. Both festivals have spaces set apart for 'sexual touching'. It has been shown then that Pagan festivals have, over the past decade, been used principally, and have been fashioned specifically, as a space for the creation of sexual identities through use of liminality and sexual symbols. What we have not explored is whether the pre-determined sexual symbolism has been present previous to this last decade, having possibly been implemented at the festivals' inception by the counter-culture of the previous generation, or if it has attained these attributed more recently. An examination of literature written on the counter-culture during the 1960s and 1970s, compared and contrasted with recent literatures on pagan festivals may provide further insight into the phenomenon of sexuality at contemporary pagan festivals.

Works Cited

- Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.
- Babalon Rising. *Babalon Rising*. April 11, 2012.
www.babalonrising.org (accessed May 7, 2012).
- Bascom, William. *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.
- Bastide, Roger. *The African Religions of Brazil*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Berger, Helen A. *A Community of Witches*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

Bonewits, P.E.I. *Real Magic*. Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Co., 1971.

Broek, Roelof van den. "SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL SYMBOLISM IN HERMETIC AND Gnostic THOUGHT AND PRACTICE (SECOND-FOURTH CENTURIES)." In *Hidden Intercours: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV,, 2008.

Craddock, Ida. *Lunar and Sex Worship*. York Beach: Teitan Press, 2010.

Crowley, Aleister. *De Arte Magica*. San Francisco: Level Press, 1974.

—. *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*. Chicago: Teitan Press, 1986.

—. *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*. Chicago: Teitan Press, 1991.

Cunningham, Scott. *Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1991.

Denning, Melita and Phillips, Osborne. *The Magick of Sex*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1982.

DuQuette, Lon Milo and Hyatt, Christopher. *Sex Magick, Tantra and Tarot: The Way of the Secret Lover*. Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 1991.

Duquette, Lon Milo. *The Magick of Thelema*. Yorke Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1993.

Farrar, Janet and Stewart. *A Witches Bible Complete*. New York: Magickal Child Publishing, Inc., 1981.

Frost, Gavin. *Tantric Yoga*. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1989.

Garrison, Omar. *tantra: The Yoga of Sex*. New York: The Julian Press, Inc., 1964.

- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973.
- Grant, Kenneth. *Cults of the Shadow*. New York, 1976.
- Greenwood, Susan. *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*. Oxford: Berg Publications, 2000.
- Hakl, Hans T. *Hidden Intercourse : THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SEXUAL MAGIC*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Hale, Brandon A. "Fires and Festivals: a study of Pagan Festivals in Contemporary America." 2002.
- Jackson, CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL. *ALL OF THEM WITCHES: METHODS OF SCHOLARSHIP IN THE STUDY OF NEO-PAGANISM*, M.A. Thesis. Religious Studies, University of Colorado, 2005.
- Jung, Fritz. *The Witches Voice*. October 3, 2011.
<http://www.witchvox.org/> (accessed October 5, 2011).
- Kermani, Susann Zohreh. *Parenting in Neverland: Childhood religion and family values in contemporary American Paganism*, PhD Diss. Religion, Harvard University, 2009.
- Kowalchuk, Claudia. *A study of two "deviant" religious groups: The Assemblies of God and the Ordo Templi Orientis*, PhD Diss. . Sociology, New York University, 1994.
- Kraig, Donald Michael. *Modern Magick*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1988.
- . *Modern Sex Magick*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 2005.
- Kripal, Jeffrey. *Esalen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- . *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- . *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Kripal, Jeffrey. "THE ROAR OF AWAKENING: THE EROS OF ESALEN AND THE WESTERN TRANSMISSION OF TANTRA." In *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*,

- by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008.
- . *The Serpent's Gift*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Little, Tracy Leigh. *An ethnographic study of Neo-Pagan folklife: Festivals and the creation of Neo-Pagan identities and Cultures in the United States*, PhD Diss. Anthropology, Ohio State University, 1995.
- Luhrmann, Tanya. *Persuasions of the Witches Craft*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Madden, Jennifer. *Divine comedy: Sacred play and subversion in contemporary neo-Pagan festival*, PhD Diss. Theater and Performance Studies, Brown University, 2008.
- Mauss, Marcel. *A General Theory of Magic*. London: Routledge, 1972.
- MoonOak, Luke. *The Church of All Worlds: An ethnography of a NeoPagan religion in the United States*, PhD Diss. Humanities, California Institute of Intergal Studies, 2009.
- Morris, Brian. *Anthropological Studies of religion: An Introductory Text*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Nanda, Serena. *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc., 2002.
- Wild Magic*. Performed by Sulumor and Lady Nethim. Wild Magic Festival Fire, Bedford. September 14, 2004.
- Orion, Loretta. *Never Again the Burning Times*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc., 1995.
- Palmer, Susan. *Moon Sisters, Krishna Mothers, Rajneesh Lovers: Women's Roles in New Religions*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Pike, Sarah M. *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

- Raabe, Holly R. *Witches, heathens and shamans: Religious experience and gender identity among contemporary Pagans in the United States*, M.A. Thesis. Anthropology, Iowa State University, 2009.
- Rafferty, Beverly G. *An examination of Modern Pagan identity formation through its symbols*, M.A. Thesis. Liberal Studies, SUNY Empire State University, 2008.
- Schreck, Nikolas and Zeena. *Demons of the Flesh: The Complete Guide to Left-Hand Path Sex Magic*. Creation Books, 2002.
- Spiegelberg, Frederic. *Spiritual Practices of India*. New York: Citidel Press, 1962.
- Stoller, Paul. *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Treesong, interview by Brandon A. Hale. *Wild Magick festival* (September 14, 2006).
- Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969.
- Urban, Hugh. "THE YOGA OF SEX: TANTRA, ORIENTALISM, AND SEX MAGIC IN THE ORDO TEMPLI ORIENTIS." In *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008.
- Wolfson, Elliot R. "MURMURING SECRETS: EROTICISM AND ESOTERICISM IN MEDIEVAL KABBALAH." In *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008.
- Ying, Chinghui Jianying. *Being and knowing in wholeness Chinese Chan, Tibetan Dzogchen, and the logic of immediacy in Contemplation*, PhD Diss. Religious Studies, Rice University, 2010.
- York, Michael. *Pagan Theology*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Appendix A

Summerstar 2002 - Opening ritual, Narrative text

The sun is just setting behind the crest of the mountain and a deepening twilight settles over the valley. Some 120 participants slowly start to gather around a fire pit in the middle of an open area. The fire is lit and the flames lick upward into the quickly darkening sky. A mulatto woman dressed in a dark green robe speaks to those gathered from the center of the circle.

"We are here tonight to take part in this year's main ritual. It is to be a ritual of healing and reflection. Those of you who do not wish to participate in this evening's working should leave the ritual space."

As the woman continues to speak two men start to walk among the crowd, handing people pieces of tree limbs, cut to resemble small fire logs.

"As a ritual of healing we must first decide what it is that we are trying to heal, what it is that we need to heal in ourselves. I'm sure we all carry blockages with us throughout the year, things that we need to get out of ourselves . . . this is your opportunity. Tonight's ritual is yours, as you can see I am having the festival assistants pass out cut branches. They will be passing out lengths of twine shortly. Your personalized part of this evening's ritual will be to wrap and tie the twine around the piece of cut branch. As you do so you should think about and envision the problems and pains you wish to free yourself from. Project these burdens into the wood, and as you tie the twine about it, envision the knots you tie as the knots inside of yourselves. You should then take the pocket knife that you were instructed to bring to the main ritual and carve a symbol onto the wood. This symbol should encompass all of the negative feeling you have projected into the cutting of wood."

As she finishes explaining the mechanics of the main ritual everyone starts tying and wrapping the twine around their piece of wood. Shortly after they started carving on it, using extreme care and concentration. As the ritual participants finished their tasks the woman in green continued her instructions.

"We will begin the ritual by forming two circles around the fire, one outer and one inner ring. Within the inner ring I will open and begin the ritual by performing the Star Ruby. After I am finished we will start the second part of the ritual. The inner ring will start to rotate clockwise around the fire, don't worry about correct speed, you will find your rhythm. The outer ring will start to move counter-clockwise. As we start to find our rhythm we will begin to chant. We will begin the chant slowly, but increase our speed as we start to move faster around the fire. The chant shall be, *Heal the bones of our mothers, heal the bones of our fathers. Heal the hearts of our children, heal our hearts for the children.* We will repeat this affirmation over and over as we spin around the fire. When we each individually feel that the time is right will, we will each break away from the circle and approach the flames of the inner fire. Once there we will cast our pieces of wood into the flames where it and our pain will be burnt away by the cleansing fire."

Appendix B

The Gnostic Mass

Liber XV

Ecclesiæ Gnosticæ Catholicæ Canon Missæ

*Edited from the Ancient Documents in
Assyrian and Greek by The Master Therion*

Disclaimer: *This copy of Liber XV is for study use only. Although it has been checked for accuracy, it has not been approved for public performance.*

I OF THE FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

IN THE EAST, that is, in the direction of Boleskine, which is situated on the South-Eastern shore of Loch Ness in Scotland, two miles east of Foyers, is a shrine or High Altar. Its dimensions should be 7 feet in length, 3 feet in breadth, 44 inches in height. It should be covered with a crimson altar-cloth, on which may be embroidered fleur-de-lys in gold, or a sunblaze, or other suitable emblem.

On each side of it should be a pillar or obelisk, with countercharges in black and white.

Below it should be the dais of three steps, in black and white squares.

Above it is the super-altar, at whose top is the Stèle of Revealing in reproduction, with four candles on each side of it. Below the stèle is a place for The Book of the Law, with six candles on each side of it. Below this again is the Holy Graal, with roses on each side of it. There is room in front of the Cup for the Paten. On each side beyond the roses are two great candles.

All this is enclosed within a great Veil.

Forming the apex of an equilateral triangle whose base is a line drawn between the pillars, is a small black square altar, of superimposed cubes.

Taking this altar as the middle of the base of a similar and equal triangle, at the apex of this second triangle is a small circular font.

Repeating, the apex of a third triangle is an upright coffin, or Tomb.

II OF THE OFFICERS OF THE MASS

The PRIEST. *Bears the Sacred Lance, and is clothed at first in a plain white robe.*

The PRIESTESS. *Should be actually Virgo Intacta or specially dedicated to the service of the Great Order. She is clothed in white, blue, and gold. She bears the Sword from a red girdle, and the Paten and Hosts, or Cakes of Light.*

The DEACON. *He is clothed in white and yellow. He bears The Book of the Law.*

Two CHILDREN. *They are clothed in white and black. One bears a pitcher of water and a cellar of salt, the other a censer of fire and a casket of perfume.*

III OF THE CEREMONY OF THE INTROIT

The DEACON, opening the door of the Temple, admits the congregation and takes his stand between the small altar and the font. [There should be a doorkeeper to attend to the admission]. The DEACON advances and bows before the open shrine where the Graal is exalted. He kisses The Book of the Law three times, opens it, and places it upon the super-altar. He turns West.

The DEACON: **Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty in the name of IAO.**

The CONGREGATION: **Love is the law, love under will.**

The DEACON goes to his place between the altar of incense and the font, faces East, and gives the step and sign of a Man and a Brother. All imitate him.

The DEACON and all the People:

I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD; and in one Star in the Company of Stars of whose fire we are created, and to which we shall return; and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, in His name CHAOS, the sole viceregent of the Sun upon the Earth; and in one Air the nourisher of all that breathes.

And I believe in one Earth, the Mother of us all, and in one Womb wherein all men are begotten, and wherein they shall rest, Mystery of Mystery, in Her name BABALON.

And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion, Mystery of Mystery, in His name BAPHOMET.

And I believe in one Gnostic and Catholic Church of Light, Life, Love and Liberty, the Word of whose Law is THELEMA.

And I believe in the communion of Saints.

And, forasmuch as meat and drink are transmuted in us daily into spiritual substance, I believe in the Miracle of the Mass.

And I confess one Baptism of Wisdom whereby we accomplish the Miracle of Incarnation.

And I confess my life one, individual, and eternal that was, and is, and is to come.

AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN.

Music is now played. The [negative] CHILD enters with the ewer and the salt. The VIRGIN enters with the Sword and the Paten. The [positive] CHILD enters with the censer and the perfume. They face the DEACON, deploying into line, from the space between the two altars.

The VIRGIN: **Greeting of Earth and Heaven!**

All give the Hailing Sign of a Magician, the DEACON leading.

The PRIESTESS, the negative CHILD on her left, the positive CHILD on her right, ascends the steps of the High Altar. They await her below. She places the Paten before the Graal. Having adored it, she descends, and with the CHILDREN following her, the positive next her, she moves in a serpentine manner involving 3 and a half circles of the Temple. (Deosil about altar, widdershins about font, deosil about altar and font, widdershins about altar, and so to the Tomb in the West.) She draws her Sword and pulls down the Veil therewith.

The PRIESTESS: **By the power of + Iron, I say unto thee, Arise. In the name of our lord the + Sun, and of our LORD + ..., that thou mayst administer the virtues to the Brethren.**

She sheathes the Sword.

The PRIEST, issuing from the Tomb, holding the Lance erect with both hands, right over left, against his breast, takes the first three regular steps. He then gives the Lance to the PRIESTESS, and gives the three penal signs. He then kneels and worships the Lance with both hands.

Penitential music.

The PRIEST: **I am a man among men.**

He takes again the Lance, and lowers it. He rises.

The PRIEST: **How should I be worthy to administer the virtues to the Brethren?**

The PRIESTESS takes from the child the water and the salt, and mixes them in the font.

The PRIESTESS: **Let the salt of Earth admonish the water to bear the virtue of the Great Sea. (Genuflects.) Mother, be thou adored.**

(She returns to the West. + on PRIEST with open hand doth she make, over his forehead, breast, and body.)

Be the PRIEST pure of body and soul!

(The PRIESTESS takes the censer from the CHILD, and places it on the small altar. She puts incense therein.)

**Let the Fire and the Air make sweet the world! (Genuflects.)
Father, be thou adored.**

(She returns West, and makes + with the censer before the PRIEST, thrice as before.)

Be the PRIEST fervent of body and soul!

*(The CHILDREN resume their weapons as they are done with.)
The DEACON now takes the consecrated Robe from High Altar, and brings it to her. She robes the PRIEST in his Robe of scarlet and gold.*

**The PRIESTESS: Be the flame of the Sun thine ambience, O thou
PRIEST of the sun!**

The DEACON brings the crown from the High Altar. (The crown may be of gold or platinum, or of electrum magicum; but with no other metals, save the small proportions necessary to a proper alloy. It may be adorned with divers jewels, at will but it must have the Uraeus serpent twined about it, and the cap of maintenance must match the scarlet of the Robe. Its texture should be velvet.)

Be the Serpent thy crown, O thou PRIEST of the Lord!

Kneeling, she takes the Lance, between her open hands, and runs them up and down upon the shaft eleven times, very gently.

Be the LORD present among us!

All give the Hailing Sign.

The People: So mote it be.

IV
OF THE CEREMONY OF THE OPENING OF THE VEIL

**The PRIEST: Thee therefore whom we adore we also invoke. By the
power of the lifted Lance!**

He raises the Lance. All repeat Hailing Sign. A phrase of triumphant music. The PRIEST takes the PRIESTESS by her right hand with his left, keeping the Lance raised.

**I, PRIEST and KING, take thee, Virgin pure without spot; I
upraise thee; I lead thee to the East; I set thee upon the summit**

of the Earth.

He thrones the PRIESTESS upon the altar. The DEACON and the CHILDREN follow, they in rank, behind him. The PRIESTESS takes The Book of the Law, resumes her seat, and holds it open on her breast with her two hands, making a descending triangle with thumbs and forefingers.

The PRIEST gives the lance to the DEACON to hold, and takes the ewer from the CHILD, and sprinkles the PRIESTESS, making five crosses, forehead, shoulders, and thighs. The thumb of the PRIEST is always between his index and medius, whenever he is not holding the Lance. The PRIEST takes the censer from the CHILD, and makes five crosses, as before. The CHILDREN replace their weapons on their respective altars.

The PRIEST kisses The Book of the Law three times. He kneels for a space in adoration, with joined hands, knuckles closed, thumb in position aforesaid. He rises, and draws the veil over the whole altar. All rise and stand to order.

The PRIEST takes the Lance from the DEACON, and holds it as before, as Osiris or Ptah. He circumambulates the Temple three times, followed by the DEACON and the CHILDREN as before. (These, when not using their hands, keep their arms crossed upon their breasts.) At the last circumambulation they leave him, and go to the place between the font and the small altar, where they kneel in adoration, their hands joined palm to palm, and raised above their heads. All imitate this motion.

The PRIEST returns to the East, and mounts the first step of the Altar.

The PRIEST: "O circle of Stars whereof our Father is but the younger brother, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, before whom Time is Ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark, not unto Thee may we attain, unless Thine image be Love. Therefore by seed and root and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke Thee.

"Then the PRIEST answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat; O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!"

During this speech the PRIESTESS must have divested herself completely of her robe. See CCXX I:62.

The PRIESTESS: "But to love me is better than all things; if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather

goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour and pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head-dress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me! "To me! To me!" "Sing the raptuous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you. I am the blue-lidded daughter of sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me!"

The PRIEST mounts the second step.

The PRIEST: O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adareth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.

"I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life; yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am alone; there is no God where I am."

The DEACON and all rise to their feet, with the Hailing sign.

The DEACON: But ye, O my people rise up and awake!
 Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy and beauty!
 There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times.
 A feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride!
 A feast for the three days of the writing of *The Book of the Law*.
 A feast for Tahuti and the Child of the Prophet—secret, O Prophet!
 A feast for the Supreme Ritual, and a feast for the Equinox of the Gods.
 A feast for fire and a feast for water; a feast for life and a greater feast for death!
 A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture!
 A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost delight!

The PRIEST mounts the third step.

The PRIEST: Thou that art One, our Lord in the Universe the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery, uttermost being whose radiance enlightening the worlds is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee—By the Sign of Light + appear Thou glorious upon the throne of the Sun.

Make open the path of creation and of intelligence between us and our minds. Enlighten our understanding.

Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection.

A ka dua
 Tuf ur biu

**Bi a'a chefu
Dudu nur af an nuteru!**

The PRIESTESS: "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."

The PRIEST parts the veil with his lance. During the previous speeches the PRIESTESS has, if necessary, as in savage countries, resumed her robe.

The PRIEST: **IO IO IO IAO SABAO KURIE ABRASAX KURIE MEITHRAS KURIE PHALLE. IO PAN, IO PAN PAN IO ISCHUROS, IO ATHANATOS IO ABROTOS IO IAO. KAIRE PHALLE KAIRE PAMPHAGE KAIRE PANGENETOR. HAGIOS, HAGIOS, HAGIOS IAO.**

The PRIESTESS is seated with the Paten in her right hand and the cup in her left. The PRIEST presents the Lance, which she kisses eleven times. She then holds it to her breast, while the PRIEST, falling at her knees, kisses them, his arms stretched along her thighs. He remains in this adoration while the DEACON intones the Collects.

All stand to order, with the Dieu Garde, that is, feet square, hands, with linked thumbs, held loosely. This is the universal position when standing, unless other direction is given.

V
OF THE OFFICE OF THE COLLECTS
WHICH ARE ELEVEN IN NUMBER

The Sun

The DEACON: **Lord visible and sensible of whom this earth is but a frozen spark turning about thee with annual and diurnal motion, source of light, source of life, let thy perpetual radiance hearten us to continual labour and enjoyment; so that as we are constant partakers of thy bounty we may in our particular orbit give out light and life, sustenance and joy to them that revolve about us without diminution of substance or effulgence for ever.**

The People: **So mote it be.**

The Lord

The DEACON: **Lord secret and most holy, source of life, source of love, source of liberty, be thou ever constant and mighty within us, force of energy, fire of motion; with diligence let us ever labour with thee, that we may remain in thine abundant joy.**

The People: **So mote it be.**

The Moon

The DEACON: **Lady of night, that turning ever about us art now visible and now invisible in thy season, be thou favourable to hunters, and lovers, and to all men that toil upon the earth, and to all mariners upon the sea.**

The People: So mote it be.

The Lady

The DEACON: **Giver and receiver of joy, gate of life and love, be thou ever ready, thou and thine handmaiden, in thine office of gladness.**

The People: So mote it be.

The Saints

The DEACON: **LORD of Life and Joy, that art the might of man, that art the essence of every true god that is upon the surface of the Earth, continuing knowledge from generation unto generation, thou adored of us upon heaths and in woods, on mountains and in caves, openly in the marketplaces and secretly in the chambers of our houses, in temples of gold and ivory and marble as in these other temples of our bodies, we worthily commemorate them worthy that did of old adore thee and manifest they glory unto men,**

(At each name the DEACON signs + with thumb between index and medius. At ordinary mass it is only necessary to commemorate those whose names are in bold face, with wording as is shown.)

Lao-tzu and Siddhartha and Krishna and Tahuti, Mosheh, Dionysus, Mohammed and To Mega Therion, with these also, Hermes, Pan, Priapus, Osiris and Melchizedek, Khem and Amoun and Mentu, Heracles, Orpheus and Odysseus; with Vergilius, Catullus, Martialis, Rabelais, Swinburne, and many an holy bard; Apollonius Tyanæus, Simon Magus, Manes, Pythagoras, Basilides, Valentinus, Bardesanes and Hippolytus, that transmitted the Light of the Gnosis to us their successors and their heirs; with Merlin, Arthur, Kamuret, Parzival, and many another, prophet, priest and king, that bore the Lance and Cup, the Sword and Disk, against the Heathen; and these also, Carolus Magnus and his paladins, with William of Schyren, Frederick of Hohenstaufen, Roger Bacon, Jacobus Burgundus Molensis the Martyr, Christian Rosencreutz, Ulrich von Hutten, Paracelsus, Michael Maier, Roderic Borgia Pope Alexander the Sixth, Jacob Bøhme, Francis Bacon Lord Verulam, Andrea, Robertus de Fluctibus, Johannes Dee, Sir Edward Kelly, Thomas Vaughan, Elias Ashmole, Molinos, Adam Weishaupt, Wolfgang von Goethe, Ludovicus Rex Bavariae, Richard Wagner, Alphonse Louis Constant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Hargrave Jennings, Carl Kellner, Forlong dux, Sir Richard Payne Knight, Paul Gauguin, Sir Richard Francis Burton, Doctor Gérard Encausse, Doctor Theodor Reuss, and Sir Aleister Crowley—Oh Sons of the Lion and the Snake! With all thy saints we worthily commemorate them worthy that were and are and are to come.

May their essence be here present, potent, puissant and paternal to perfect this feast!

The People: So mote it be.

The Earth

The DEACON: **Mother of fertility on whose breast lieth water, whose cheek is caressed by air, and in whose heart is the suns**

fire, womb of all life, recurring grace of seasons, answer favorably the prayer of labour, and to pastors and husbandmen be thou propitious.

The People: So mote it be.

The Principles

The DEACON: **Mysterious Energy, triform, mysterious Matter, in fourfold and sevenfold division, the interplay of which things weave the dance of the Veil of Life upon the Face of the Spirit, let there be Harmony and Beauty in your mystic loves, that in us may be health and wealth and strength and divine pleasure according to the Law of Liberty; let each pursue his Will as a strong man that rejoiceth in his way, as the course of a Star that blazeth for ever among the joyous company of Heaven.**

The People: So mote it be.

Birth

The DEACON: **Be the hour auspicious, and the gate of life open in peace and in well-being, so that she that beareth children may rejoice, and the babe catch life with both hands.**

The People: So mote it be.

Marriage

The DEACON: **Upon all that this day unite with love under will let fall success; may strength and skill unite to bring forth ecstasy, and beauty answer beauty.**

The People: So mote it be.

Death

All stand, Head erect, Eyes open.

The DEACON: **Term of all that liveth, whose name is inscrutable, be favourable unto us in thine hour.**

The People: So mote it be.

The End

The DEACON: **Unto them from whose eyes the veil of life hath fallen may there be granted the accomplishment of their true Wills; whether they will absorption in the Infinite, or to be united with their chosen and preferred, or to be in contemplation, or to be at peace, or to achieve the labour and heroism of incarnation on this planet or another, or in any Star, or aught else, unto them may there be granted the accomplishment of their wills; yea, the accomplishment of their wills. AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN.**

The People: **So mote it be.**

All sit.

The DEACON and the CHILDREN attend the PRIEST and PRIESTESS, ready to hold any appropriate weapon as may be necessary.

VI

OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

The PRIEST makes the five crosses.

+1

+3 +2

on paten and cup; +4 on paten alone; +5 on cup alone.

The PRIEST: **Life of man upon earth, fruit of labour, sustenance of endeavour, thus be thou nourishment of the Spirit!**

He touches the Host with the Lance.

By the virtue of the Rod! Be this bread the Body of God!

He takes the Host.

TOUTO ESTI TO SOMA MOU.

He kneels, adores, rises, turns shows Host to the people, turns, replaces Host, and adores. Music. He takes the Cup.

Vehicle of the joy of Man upon earth, solace of labour, inspiration of endeavour, thus be thou ecstasy of the Spirit!

He touches the Cup with the Lance.

By the virtue of the Rod! Be this wine the Blood of God!

He takes the Cup.

TOUTO ESTI TO POTERION TOU HAIMATOS MOU.

He kneels, adores, rises, turns, shows the Cup to the people, turns replaces the Cup, and adores. Music.

For this is the Covenant of Resurrection.

He makes the five crosses on the PRIESTESS.

Accept, O LORD, this sacrifice of life and joy, true warrants of the Covenant of Resurrection.

The PRIEST offers the Lance to the PRIESTESS, who kisses it; he then touches her between the breasts and upon the body. He then

flings out his arms upward, as comprehending the whole shrine.

Let this offering be borne upon the waves of Aethyr to our Lord and Father the Sun that travelleth over the Heavens in his name ON.

He closes his hands, kisses the PRIESTESS between the breasts, and makes three great crosses over the Paten, the Cup, and himself. He strikes his breast. All repeat this action.

Hear ye all, saints of the true church of old time now essentially present, that of ye we claim heirship, with ye we claim communion, from ye we claim benediction in the name of IAO.

He makes three crosses on Paten and Cup together. He uncovers the Cup, genuflects, takes the Cup in his left hand and the Host in his right. With the Host he makes the five crosses on the Cup.

+1
+3 +2
+5 +4

He elevates the Host and the Cup. The Bell strikes.

HAGIOS HAGIOS HAGIOS IAO!

He replaces the Host and the Cup, and adores.

VII
OF THE OFFICE OF THE ANTHEM

The PRIEST:
**Thou who art I, beyond all I am,
 Who hast no nature and no name,
 Who art, when all but Thou are gone,
 Thou, centre and secret of the Sun,
 Thou, hidden spring of all things known
 And unknown, Thou aloof, alone,
 Thou, the true fire within the reed
 Brooding and breeding, source and seed
 Of life, love, liberty, and light,
 Thou beyond speech and beyond sight,
 Thee I invoke, my faint fresh fire
 Kindling as mine intents aspire.
 Thee I invoke, abiding one,
 Thee, centre and secret of the Sun,
 And that most holy mystery
 Of which the vehicle am I.
 Appear, most awful and most mild,
 As it is lawful, to thy child!**

The Chorus:
**For of the Father and the Son
 The Holy Spirit is the norm;
 Male-female, quintessential, one,**

Man-being veiled in Woman-form.
 Glory and worship in the highest,
 Thou Dove, mankind that deifiest,
 Being that race, most royally run
 To spring sunshine through winter storm.
 Glory and worship be to Thee,
 Sap of the world-ash, wonder-tree!

First Semichorus, Men: **Glory to Thee from Gilded Tomb!**

Second Semichorus, Women: **Glory to Thee from Waiting Womb!**

Men: **Glory to Thee from earth unploughed!**

Women: **Glory to Thee from virgin vowed!**

Men: **Glory to Thee, true Unity
 Of the Eternal Trinity!**

Women: **Glory to Thee, thou sire and dam
 And self of I am that I am!**

Men: **Glory to Thee, beyond all term,
 Thy spring of sperm, thy seed and germ!**

Women: **Glory to Thee, eternal Sun,
 Thou One in Three, Thou Three in One!**

Chorus: **Glory and worship unto Thee,
 Sap of the world-ash, wonder-tree!**

(These words are to form the substance of the anthem; but the whole or any part thereof shall be set to music, which may be as elaborate as art can devise. But even should other anthems be authorized by the Father of the Church, this shall hold its place as the first of its kind, the father of all others.)

VIII
 OF THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE
 AND CONSUMMATION OF THE ELEMENTS

The PRIEST takes the Paten between the index and medius of the right hand. The PRIESTESS clasps the Cup in her right hand.

The PRIEST: **LORD most secret, bless this spiritual food unto our bodies, bestowing upon us health and wealth and strength and joy and peace, and that fulfilment of will and of love under will that is perpetual happiness.**

He makes + with Paten and kisses it. He uncovers the Cup, genuflects, rises. Music. He takes the Host, and breaks it over the Cup. He replaces the right-hand portion in the Paten. He

breaks off a particle of the left-hand portion.

**TOUTO ESTI TO SPERMA MOU. HO PATER ESTIN HO HUIOS DIA TO PNEUMA
HAGION. AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN.**

He replaces the left-hand part of the Host. The PRIESTESS extends the Lance-point with her left hand to receive the particle. The PRIEST clasps the Cup in his left hand. Together they depress the Lance-point in the Cup.

The PRIEST and the PRIESTESS: **hriliu.**

The PRIEST takes the Lance. The PRIESTESS covers the Cup. The PRIEST genuflects, rises, bows, joins hands. He strikes his breast.

The PRIEST: **O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be
mighty among us.
O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be mighty among
us.
O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be mighty among
us.**

The PRIEST joins hands upon the breast of the PRIESTESS, and takes back his Lance. He turns to the People, lowers and raises the Lance, and makes + upon them.

The PRIEST: **Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.**

The People: **Love is the law, love under will.**

He lowers the Lance, and turns to East. The PRIESTESS takes the Lance in her right hand. With her left hand she offers the Paten. The PRIEST kneels.

The PRIEST: **In my mouth be the essence of the Life of the Sun.**

He takes the Host with the right hand, makes + with it on the Paten, and consumes it. Silence. The PRIESTESS takes, uncovers, and offers the Cup, as before.

The PRIEST: **In my mouth be the essence of the Joy of the Earth!**

He takes the Cup, makes + on the PRIESTESS, drains it and returns it. Silence. He rises, takes the Lance, and turns to the people.

The PRIEST: **There is no part of me that is not of the Gods.**

(Those of the people who intend to communicate, and none other should be present, having signified their intention, a whole Cake of Light, and a whole goblet of wine, have been prepared for each one. The DEACON marshals them; they advance one by one to the altar. The CHILDREN take the Elements and offer them. The people

communicate as did the *PRIEST*, uttering the same words in an attitude of Resurrection:

"There is no part of me that is not of the Gods."

The exceptions to this part of the ceremony are when it is of the nature of a celebration, in which case none but the *PRIEST* communicate; or part of the ceremony of marriage, when none other, save the two to be married, partake; part of the ceremony of baptism, when only the child baptised partakes; and of Confirmation at puberty, when only the persons confirmed partake. The Sacrament may be reserved by the *PRIEST*, for administration to the sick in their homes.

The *PRIEST* closes all within the veil. With the Lance he makes + on the people thrice, thus.

The *PRIEST*:

+ The LORD bless you.

+ The LORD enlighten your minds and comfort your hearts and sustain your bodies.

+ The LORD bring you to the accomplishment of your True Wills, the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.

He goes out, the *DEACON* and *CHILDREN* following, into the tomb of the West.

Music. (Voluntary.)

NOTE: The PRIESTESS and other officers never partake of the Sacrament, they being as it were part of the PRIEST himself.
NOTE: Certain secret formulae of this Mass are taught to the PRIEST and PRIESTESS in their Ordination

Appendix C

Sample of workshops offered at the Babalon Rising annual Pagan festival.

An Evening of Kabalistic Sex Magick

Presented by: Donald M. Kraig

Babalon Rising 2012

Join Donald Michael Kraig, author of *Modern Magick* and *Modern Sex Magick*, for an evening of information and experimentation, self-realization and illumination.

This workshop will be unlike anything you have ever had before, and here are just some of the reasons why. The workshop starts at 9:00 pm and will run until we decide for it to end. Will it end at 11:00? 12:00? 1:00? You will have the opportunity to learn and experience as much as you desire. Unlike other workshops, An Evening of Kabalistic Sex Magick is modular. At the end of each module there will be a break. You may leave after any module.

Module 1: History

In this module Don will share the documented history of Kabalistic Sex Magick. You will learn how it began, how it existed in the famous temples of Jerusalem, how it evolved over the centuries, and how it was finally revealed.

Module 2: Experiencing the Energy

In this module you will experience flows of energy similar to what is experienced during Sex Magick.

Module 3: The Types of Kabalistic Sex Magick

In this module you will learn about how Kabalistic Sex Magick actually works. How the energy is raised, directed, etc.

Module 4: Arousing the Energy

In this module we will work with raising the sexual energy and directing it. The focus is on individual work.

Module 5: Directing the Energy

In this module we will work with directing the energy through the body of a partner. No nudity or direct sexual contact takes place here.

Module 6: Sex Magick Energy Work

Working clothed but with a partner or partners, we will experience more complete work with the energy raised.

Module 7: Sex Magick

Here we will put together all we have learned in order to perform a personal magical ritual.

Module 8: Going Farther

At the beginning of this module the people remaining will briefly discuss what they would like to do for the rest of the class. People should bring comfortable pillows and towels to sit/lie on. Wear comfortable clothes that are easy to move in: no jeans! (They're too tight.)

Couple and Individuals are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please bring something light to eat and share in bite-size pieces (fruits and veggies are ideal). Also bring something to drink, including water.

Active participation through Module 7 is expected of all who attend. No looky-loos! This includes movement but no sexual touching. Individuals will be paired with others when necessary.

This is NOT just another lecture. When you leave (perhaps in the early hours of the morning), you should be tired but TRAINED. You will be able to use this knowledge for greater self-awareness, better magick and lots of fun!

Putting Out in the Name of the Gods

Presented by: The Pink Sphinx

Babalon Rising 2012

Calling all Temple Priests, Sacred Sluts, Horned Hos, Scarlet Women and Beasts! If you know (or suspect) that you have a calling in the field of Sacred Sexual Service you may want to grab your bag o' tricks and hop on over to this lecture/discussion facilitated by The Pink Sphinx of Babylon. In the opening section, The Pink Sphinx will share some of the experiences and observations she and a few others have made while traipsing down the path of the "Sacred Whore". In the second section, the participants will be encouraged to discuss the ups and the downs of providing sexual service to other people in the name of specific gods and spirits. *The content of this talk is not gender, /orientation specific. Some "kink content" will be included.*

Thee Open Sex

Thee Open Sex is a collaborative aural art project made up of outsider musicians from Bloomington, Indiana. Drawing from the psychedelic and mystical crooked paths that modern society spurns, these friends find a common thread of freaky love and turn it into sound. They have been aroused by the goddess Babalon, the 93 current, and their own ritualistic group experiences to create songs EXCLUSIVELY for the 2012 Babalon Rising festival!

Performing at BR for the first time ever, they are here to serve the vibe.

Love Without Limits

Presented by: Mgdlyn M

Babalon Rising 2012

Negotiating the dark side of polyamory and non traditional relationships from

a magical as well as practical perspective.

We all know about the fun side of living a lifestyle outside of societies norms, but what about when it runs into road bumps? Lets talk about what happens when outside forces such as family members, other lovers, and jobs threaten the security of a relationship. Sex workers have issues that are unique in navigating their personal relationships, and then there are substance abuse issues, such as what happens when one partner decided to follow a track of sobriety, or choose a new spiritual path?

The great news is that Thelemic philosophers we are well prepared to adjust adapt and thrive, the not so good news is that sometimes it hurts. Lets bring our own experiences to the table and share the ways in which we have navigated these difficult and sometimes heart wrenching experiences.

Mythos Tantra

Presented by: Soror Panthera

Babalon Rising 2012

A dark sexual rite Invoking the energies of the Old Ones to generate wealth. Featuring work from the now infamous "Gutter Bible" ~ 1 hour presentation/ritual

Hedonic Engineering for Partners

Presented by: Phil Farber

Babalon Rising 2012

Did you know that the human brain is able to create lasting change in itself quickly and easily? Did you know that it's a very simple matter to feel good whenever you want? Techniques to create and manage wonderful feelings will be demonstrated - with an eye (or other body part) aimed toward applying them to magick (and sex magick!), so get ready to enjoy yourself - now! We will be using some choice bits from hypnosis and NLP to explore how we can influence each other toward peak states of pleasure and intelligence. Have fun with your favorite partner, or meet someone to play with at the workshop. Learn how to share energy flows, access partner entities, and develop cues to instantly restore wonderful feelings.

The Feast of the Beast

Annual Babalon Rising Ritual

The Feast of the Beast celebratory ritual takes place Saturday night at each Babalon Rising Festival.

All guests of the festival are invited to join in the Feast of the Beast as is their Will. The purpose of the Feast of the Beast ritual is to usher in the New Aeon and align all participants with the 93 current through the creation of the "Magickal Child".

Attendees are encouraged to dress in costume, either as god-forms or as their higher selves/true selves. Scarlet Women, Satyrs, Warriors of Thebes, Maenads, Black-Robed Mages, Skyclad Nymphs, and all and sundry revelers are more than welcome!

After the formal portion of this ritual is complete midnight Resh is proclaimed and an all-night revel begins. Games with prizes will be ongoing. Feasting areas will be available to all assembled. The Feast of Food tent will contain snacks and beverages. Revelers are encouraged to store any alcohol to be consumed Saturday night in this tent, in order to keep glass away from the main fire. Please donate to the Feast of Food tent as you will.

The Feast of Flesh tent will contain areas for consensual massage, experimental touch, cuddling, BDSM, and private areas for more intimate contact. Potential hierodules, doms, subs, massage therapists, Heiros Gamos couples, snuggle bunnies, and other individuals interested in pushing the boundaries of physical ecstasy are encouraged to play in this safe, spiritual space.

Sensual Aromatherapy for Magickal Intention

Presented by: Cricket

Babalon Rising 2012

In this workshop we will discuss the history of Magickal Aromatherapy and its uses in creating the setting for Sacred Sexual Space. As an Art Form, Aromatherapy, has historically been used to guide the practitioner through the levels of Intention, Grounding, Visualization, Communion and Manifestation. We will cover each of these Magickal levels and the oils most commonly used to connect ourselves to this Process. Attendees will be able to sample various essential oils, learn to make different aromatherapy blends to use as Magickal aids and concoct a personalized blend to take home for their own use.

Mysteries of The Pink Sphinx: Crystal Demo

Presented by: The Pink Sphinx

Babalon Rising 2012

Sexual energy can be a powerful tool for charging magickal gear. This can be done solo or in a group. Please join the Pink Sphinx and her crew to learn about various methodologies (group and solo) of using sexual energy to charge an object. Audience members who might be interested in participating in the demonstration portion of this demo should plan to arrive in a timely fashion. **This is a "hands on" workshop.** Participants will not be asked to touch anyone else in a sexual way other than themselves. *The content of this talk is not gender /orientation specific.*